

Rusk Takes Pounding On U.S. Commitments

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The Senate Preparedness Subcommittee pounded away at Dean Rusk again yesterday, but the Secretary of State stuck to his contention that American commitments are more likely to prevent war than to produce further military involvements all around the world.

Chairman John Stennis (D-

Miss.) expressed alarm at "an escalation of our potential obligations" and annoyance at his inability to find out the Administration's current Vietnam intentions in terms of either men or money.

But with a smile Stennis concluded the hearing by telling Rusk that "you're a good witness, especially for your view."

It was the Secretary's second appearance before the group in its inquiry into where United States commitments are leading the Nation. Much of the questioning was repetitive, especially on why America's allies are doing so little

in this Nation's hour of need in Southeast Asia.

Rusk patiently and softly responded except for a momentary loss of his normal caution and reserve. Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) riled Rusk with aspersions at the State Department and his charge of a "no win" and "a weak-kneed, spineless policy" in Vietnam.

The Secretary's voice rose as he said he wanted to "reject utterly and out of hand the idea that anyone at State would give aid and comfort to the enemy."

And he said "we can have a great war anytime we want." He contrasted the current American casualty rate of about 100 men a week with a potential of 10,000 or 100,000 a week or a nuclear exchange that would "knock out 300 million people in the first hour."

American policy, said Rusk, is to stop aggression with a measured response and to "prevent us sliding down the slippery slope" to all-out war.

"There is too much power in the world, Senator," he said, "to be infuriated. Our purpose is to build peace, not just to destroy people."

As to Vietnam, he said the American purpose is "to see that North Vietnam does not seize South Vietnam by force, and we will accomplish that result."

As to Europe, Rusk told Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.) that he opposed unilateral Western arms cuts because "down that path lies war."

And in general, he told Stennis that he had not intended at his earlier committee appearance to indicate that "our task is to defend peace anywhere and everywhere" as one headline had put it. Rather, he said, he had meant to prevent miscalculation by a potential enemy by letting him know that he could not engage with immunity in aggression against nations that have no defense ties to the United States.

As to Stennis's complaint that he could not learn Administration manpower and financial plans for Vietnam, Rusk said that the "other side" largely determines the future. Hence, he added, any estimate could only be tentative.

He denied a Stennis intima-

tion that he had said "everything's rosy" in Vietnam and he told Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) that it would be "pressing the point too far" to say that current American commitments make obsolete congressional declarations of war.

As to the Sino-Soviet row, Rusk characterized it as a "mixed picture." He told Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) that he had "no clear view" of events in Peking, where some "two dozen people at the top" are in control.

He did say it appeared that those in Red China who favored the Soviet peaceful co-existence approach were "the principle victims" of the current purge unless there is some "curious" development underneath "that we don't know."

Rusk said Lin Piao, now No. 2 in Peking, espouses a "doctrine of militancy" and he said "we don't quite see" the view offered by some China experts that Lin Piao's doctrine amounts to "do it yourself" advice to North Vietnam and other locales for wars of national liberation.

Rusk declined to comment on the idea of a meeting between President Johnson and French President de Gaulle other than to say there are "no present plans." He told Byrd that "I think they would not pay" when the Senator asked about collecting France's World War I debts.

The Secretary denied that the Central Intelligence Agency is invading the foreign policy field, "and I certainly" would know. He said the Agency had nothing to do with any of the 53 or 54 coups around the world since he had taken office.

Meanwhile, Rusk was assailed by two House members for what they called the State Department's "negative, narrow-minded and short-sighted" approach to the creation of a permanent United Nations peacekeeping force.

Rep. William S. Moorhead (D-Pa.) and Rep. Richard S. Schweiker (R-Pa.) said their proposal had the support of 77 other House members, but that the State Department had replied that the idea was "pre-mature."